

Thirty-third Annual Report
Maryland State Board
Of
Motion Picture Censors



1948-1949

Offices
848 NORTH HOWARD STREET
Baltimore-1, Maryland

785753

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Maryland State Board
Of
Motion Picture Censors

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SYDNEY R. TRAUB
Chairman

EVA M. HOLLAND
Vice-Chairman and Treasurer

JOHN K. BURKLEY
Secretary

ELMER P. BUTZ
Chief Clerk



Offices
848 NORTH HOWARD STREET
Baltimore-1, Maryland

HONORABLE WILLIAM PRESTON LANE, JR.,

Governor of Maryland,

Annapolis, Maryland

Dear Governor Lane:

Aside from the statutory requirement, the Maryland State Board of Motion Picture Censors, deems it a distinct privilege to present to you the report of its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1948 and ending June 30, 1949.

This report includes a detailed statement of receipts and disbursements in the budget account, a statement of all cash receipts in the general account, and statistical charts of films examined and their classification covering the year in question.

Work of the Board

The Board has met daily at its quarters, 848 North Howard Street, Baltimore, and has maintained a permanent record of its proceedings.

During the aforesaid period, the Board examined 2,439 original films and caused to be issued certificates for 17,907 duplicate films. Of a total of 20,346 pictures submitted, 20,122 were approved, deletions were ordered in 219, and 5 were rejected in toto.

A total of 60,290,116 feet of film passed through this Department, as compared with 54,349,089 feet during the previous year.

No appeal from the findings of the Board, in any case, was taken to the courts.

Financial Statement

The receipts for the year amounted to \$78,606.00, a sum greater than this department has ever collected. Notwithstanding a capital expenditure of \$3,232.15 for new equipment and salary increases of \$1,654.00 to employees, making the total operating expenses \$47,468.24, the sum of \$31,137.76 has been turned over to the State Treasury, which likewise represents the greatest net income this Board has ever realized. Since its inception in 1916, the Board has delivered to the State approximately \$440,000.00 over and above operating expenses, including equipment.

We fully appreciate the fact that the Board had its origin not because of a desire to increase the State's revenue, but to protect the public from the insidious poison of salacious and pernicious pictures. The pecuniary aspect is emphasized

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only to show that the people of this State have not, at any time, had to pay a single penny for the operations of the Board.

State Censorship

Motion picture censorship has existed continuously in Maryland for 33 years. No other commercial amusement has performed so vital a role in the community's recreational life. Maryland Governors and Legislatures obviously believing that so great a force for good or evil should not be left entirely to the mercies and whims of commercialism have, by their advocacy and support of successive amendments to the Act of 1916 creating the Board, established motion picture censorship upon a firm and durable basis.

A recent criticism of this Board for having rejected a Polish-language film entitled, "On Polish Land," marked "documentary" but, in point of fact, largely deceitful and false, apparently had for its real objective the abolishment of censorship in this State. It is well known that the principal attacking agency has long, if not always, opposed motion picture censorship. On the other hand, a considerable number of our representative citizens and organized groups virtually deluged the Board with communications and messages of approval of the action taken on that particular film.

"On Polish Land" was not banned because of "political ideas." Our action was in nowise "a political censorship," as had been claimed, but was based upon the premise that the picture was found to be untrue. For example, it presented scenes and dialogue in which freedom of worship was stressed: priests and nuns were shown freely entering their churches and likewise participating in public processions and gatherings, when according to all reports, their persecutions and denial of religious freedom by the Russian-Communist-dominated Polish Government were actually taking place. Again the picture, by scenes and dialogue, represented the Polish Government as liberally encouraging and supporting the activities of the Boy Scouts when, according to all reports, the Polish Government had officially ordered that organization to disband and cease. And further, it depicted Polish soldiers exchanging their guns for plows and horses, furnished them by the Polish State, and followed by their tilling of the soil, when, according to all accounts, Russia and her satellite countries were maintaining the greatest peacetime army in all history. In commenting on these scenes, the film's narrator states that the Polish soldier has, for his only objective, the establishment of a permanent peace throughout Europe. That may well be the soldier's point of view, but, again, according to all reports, it is not the attitude of the Communist controlled Polish Government.

It is the considered opinion of this Board that the above illustrations of misrepresentation and deceit amply justified it in disapproving the picture. We were not prepared to sanction the presentation to the public of so false and deceptive a film. Certainly the screen is no place for subjects that are presented without truth and sincerity, and the sooner the Board is enabled to cope with such abuses beyond legal doubt, the better it will be for the community.

That the Maryland motion picture law should be strengthened can hardly be questioned when consideration is given to the unbiased report of the Executive Secretary of the National Legion of Decency, which was released to the public on August 26, 1949. The report states that the moral qualities of post-war motion pictures have hit an all-time low, and that this condition is due partially to the influx of foreign films of which 42% were found objectionable in the period November 1947-48, and a better than 52% in the present year. The document also points out that domestic products are likewise morally deteriorating in that nearly 20% of such films today are considered to contain substantially morally objectionable elements. This figure, it is stated, is the highest since the formation of the National Legion of Decency in 1933.

Enforcement

Aside from occasional infractions of the law, the theatres in this State have been cooperating with the Board in carrying out the provisions of the motion picture statute. In two recent instances, however, the Board found it necessary to institute prosecutions for exhibiting films that had not been previously submitted for censorship—one of them involving a charge of obscenity. The latter offender took his case to the Criminal Court of Baltimore City and, upon being found guilty, was fined \$100.00 and costs. The other was adjudged guilty by a Police Magistrate and was fined \$25.00 and costs. Both of the accused had been previous violators.

Foreign Films and Committees

There has been an increasing number of foreign films. Whenever their dialogues have been in foreign languages, the Board has availed itself of its appropriate Foreign Language Committee, which acts in an advisory capacity. The citizens constituting these committees are outstanding in our community for their knowledge of the languages, traditions and customs of foreign countries. They are to be highly commended for the services they have rendered to this Board.

Public and private agencies have likewise responded to our calls for advice on pictures dealing with sex and racial problems. They, too, deserve the profound thanks of the people of this State.

Conclusion

The Board desires to convey to your Excellency its sincere appreciation of the marked interest you have manifested in the work of this department and the support that you have so generously given it.

Respectfully submitted,

SYDNEY R. TRAUB, *Chairman*

EVA M. HOLLAND, *Vice-Chairman*

JOHN K. BURKLEY, *Secretary*

August 31, 1949

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1949
Receipts

Fees:

Original Reels—35MM (7,891,401 ft.)	\$17,564.00	
Original Reels—16MM (36,142 ft.)	196.00	
Original Reels—16MM (2,792 ft.)	44.00	
(Reversible)	—————	\$17,804.00
Duplicate Reels—35MM (52,398,715 ft.)	\$59,161.00	
Duplicate Reels—16MM		
Duplicate Reels—16MM		
(Reversible)	—————	\$59,161.00
Sale of Substitute Seals (1,641).....	1,641.00	\$78,606.00
Deposited to Credit of State Treasurer.....		\$78,606.00

Expenses

Salaries:

Board Members.....	\$ 7,800.00	
Other Employees.....	30,497.06	
	—————	\$38,297.06

Other Expenses:

Repairs.....	54.91	
Light, Heat, Power and Water.....	296.78	
Traveling.....	944.51	
Communication.....	713.12	
Printing.....	75.00	
Contractual, Film Seals.....	2,400.00	
RCA Inspection Service.....	329.16	
Office Supplies.....	931.18	
Motion Picture Machine Supplies.....	161.87	
Office Equipment.....	143.30	
Motion Picture Equipment.....	3,088.85	
Insurance.....	32.50	
	—————	\$9,171.18
		—————\$47,468.24

Budget Account (Per Comptroller)

Appropriation, 1949.....	\$49,540.00	
Refunds (Communication, Item 206).....	1.45	
	—————	\$49,541.45
Less reversion to Reserve Fund.....	2,073.21	
General Fund Disbursement.....	—————	\$47,468.24

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS
TABLE SHOWING TOTAL ANNUAL RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
TOGETHER WITH THE AMOUNTS REVERTING TO
THE STATE TREASURY

October 1, 1920 — June 30, 1949

	Receipts	Disbursements	Amount Reverting to State Treasury
10-1-20 to 9-30-21.....	\$ 26,488.33	\$ 19,025.26	\$ 7,463.07
10-1-21 to 9-30-22.....	26,866.90	19,842.12	7,024.78
10-1-22 to 9-30-23.....	27,059.51	19,892.93	7,166.58
10-1-23 to 9-30-24.....	26,338.50	20,730.44	5,608.06
10-1-24 to 9-30-25.....	29,249.50	22,207.24	7,042.26
10-1-25 to 9-30-26.....	30,207.92	22,662.82	7,545.10
10-1-26 to 9-30-27.....	32,498.55	24,883.80	7,614.75
10-1-27 to 9-30-28.....	38,165.57	27,734.69	10,430.88
10-1-28 to 9-30-29.....	44,486.27	32,937.76	11,548.51
10-1-29 to 9-30-30.....	38,954.98	31,718.26	7,236.72
10-1-30 to 9-30-31.....	35,245.85	31,816.79	3,429.06
10-1-31 to 9-30-32.....	35,637.44	32,158.81	3,478.63
10-1-32 to 9-30-33.....	35,152.34	34,207.93	944.41
10-1-33 to 9-30-34.....	36,563.00	27,174.49	9,388.51
10-1-34 to 9-30-35.....	39,463.00	27,577.76	11,885.24
10-1-35 to 9-30-36.....	44,073.00	28,927.98	15,145.02
10-1-36 to 9-30-37.....	49,293.00	28,855.10	20,437.90
10-1-37 to 9-30-38.....	48,659.00	30,197.34	18,461.66
10-1-38 to 9-30-39.....	50,180.00	30,302.92	19,877.08
10-1-39 to 9-30-40.....	53,180.00	29,598.72	23,581.28
10-1-40 to 9-30-41.....	55,877.00	30,347.18	25,529.82
10-1-41 to 9-30-42.....	55,561.00	31,135.92	24,425.08
10-1-42 to 6-30-43.....	39,828.00	22,578.29	17,249.71
7-1-43 to 6-30-44.....	55,585.00	35,112.59	20,472.41
7-1-44 to 6-30-45.....	55,054.00	35,090.08	19,963.92
7-1-45 to 6-30-46.....	59,396.00	35,802.90	23,593.10
7-1-46 to 6-30-47.....	65,961.00	42,150.48	23,810.52
7-1-47 to 6-30-48.....	72,832.00	44,814.74	28,017.26
7-1-48 to 6-30-49.....	78,606.00	47,468.24	31,137.76
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$1,286,462.66	\$866,953.58	* \$419,509.08

* The above amount reverting to State Treasury does not include \$19,487.88 for period 6/1/16 to 9/30/20.

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS
REPORT OF FILMS EXAMINED
July 1, 1948 - June 30, 1949

1948	Films Original	Films Duplicate	Reels Original	Reels Duplicate	No. of Feet Original	No. of Feet Duplicate	Films Approved	Films Rejected	Films Elimi- nated
July.....	188	1,513	713	5,068	582,088	4,070,889	1,686	...	15
August.....	193	1,422	1,123	5,449	741,216	4,358,224	1,606	1	8
September.....	175	1,464	649	5,199	532,794	4,189,273	1,624	1	14
October.....	193	1,532	666	5,199	546,029	4,249,538	1,701	...	24
November.....	198	1,413	779	5,018	645,529	4,093,964	1,576	...	35
December.....	212	1,636	759	5,767	618,112	4,706,265	1,830	...	18
1949									
January.....	215	1,493	784	5,323	651,712	4,418,935	1,689	...	19
February.....	213	1,405	1,229	6,152	792,803	4,349,237	1,595	1	22
March.....	239	1,634	991	6,378	818,045	5,203,202	1,847	...	26
April.....	204	1,474	786	5,029	641,685	4,042,241	1,670	...	8
May.....	199	1,388	852	5,254	683,998	4,308,028	1,566	1	20
June.....	210	1,533	809	5,585	637,390	4,408,919	1,732	1	10
TOTALS.....	2,439	17,907	10,140	65,421	7,891,401	52,398,715	20,122	5	219

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS
CLASSIFICATION OF FILMS
July 1, 1948 - June 30, 1949

1948	Dramas	Comedies	News	Cartoons	Adver- tising	Miscel- laneous
July.....	466	248	886	142	8	1
August.....	541	180	726	155	13	..
September...	471	258	811	86	13	..
October.....	479	290	839	111	5	1
November....	485	246	751	116	10	3
December....	548	231	925	130	14	..
1949						
January.....	519	294	749	120	26	..
February.....	567	172	742	118	18	1
March.....	626	300	809	113	21	4
April.....	476	238	835	95	26	8
May.....	555	213	731	63	25	..
June.....	538	254	815	112	24	..
Totals...	6,271	2,924	9,569	1,361	203	18

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Films, Original.....	2,439			
Films, Duplicate.....	17,907			
Reels, Original.....		10,140		
Reels, Duplicate.....		65,421		
Number of Feet, Original..			7,891,401	
Number of Feet, Duplicate.			52,398,715	
Films Approved.....				20,122
Films Rejected.....				5
Films Eliminated.....				219
	20,346	75,561	60,290,116	20,346

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